

Welcome to the Great Park Pursuit

Massachusetts State Parks Family Adventure!

Looking for **FREE** family fun this summer? Look to your Massachusetts state parks and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) 2012 Great Park Pursuit! The Great Park Pursuit (GPP) invites families and family/youth groups to register as a Team and challenges them to visit 6 "park pursuits" that individual Teams create themselves. Teams can visits DCR parks and programs near their home or plan adventures across the commonwealth. Try out partner sponsored options, too!

Join the Great Park Pursuit, get outdoors and create great memories together!

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

"Click Button Below for Information and Registration"

Great Park Pursuit 2012

Below, please find a list of park programs, park destinations, neat partner options, nature activities, some helpful reminders and one special Family Camping opportunity!

GPP Picks of the Week!

Greater Boston:

Houghton's Pond Recreation Area Blue Hills Reservation Headquarters 840 Hillside Street, Milton 617-698-1802 phone

Cool **Summer Fest** on **Saturday July 28th from 10am -3pm** offers wet and wild fun for the whole family. The heat is on at Houghton's Pond but we will stay cool with wacky water games. Come by for make and take crafts, hear music, see live wildlife presentations, pond exploration, free fishing fun and more! A guaranteed good time for all! http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/houghtonsPond.htm

Northeast:

Maudslay State Park

Curzon Mill Rd., Newburyport 978-465-7223 phone

Picnic in the park! The former Moseley family estate on the Merrimack River, this park features 19th century gardens and plantings, rolling meadows, towering pines, and one of the largest naturally-occurring stands of mountain laurel in Massachusetts. An exquisite place for walking, biking, horseback riding and of course informal picnics. Make a day of it by attending a guided program (http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/northeast/maud.htm http://www.mass.gov/dcr/events/maud-july.pdf). Or pack a bathing suit and head to nearby Salisbury State Reservation for a quick dip in the Atlantic! Please note: the Parking Fee at Maudslay State Park is \$2.00.

Southeast:

Nickerson State Park and Cape Cod Rail Trail

Route 6A, Brewster 508-896-3491phone

http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/nick.htm

http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/ccrt.htm

Bring your bike to Nickerson State Park to travel along the eight miles of paved bike paths that loop through woods that slope down to the banks of eight crystal clear fresh water kettle ponds. This bike path connects with the 22-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail, which has many opportunities to get off the trail and visit a beach. Check the program schedule at the Nature Center and join in on a fun adventure through the woods of Cape Cod's Nickerson State Park. Bike trails are of moderate difficulty.

Central:

Purgatory Chasm State Reservation 198 Purgatory Road, Sutton 508-234-3733 phone

Chasm Tours

Sundays , 4:00pm - 5:15pm

Meet Outside the Visitor Center. Scramble around boulders and take in the mystery of Purgatory Chasm! For families with children over age 5. Strenuous hike. Be sure to wear shoes with good tread. Wet rocks cancel! For a less strenuous option. Enjoy the "Little Chasm Trail" easy to moderate hike around the chasm perimeter. Try climbing "rocks" at the Purgatory Chasm playground and pack a snack to eat at the adjacent picnic tables. There are always cool things to view inside the Visitor Center or plan ahead and attend a park program.

Erving State Forest

Laurel Lake Recreation Area 122 Long Pond Road, Warwick 978-544-3939 phone

This forest provides a wide variety of recreational pursuits including, boating, swimming and fishing at Laurel Lake with its beautiful, brick-lined lakeshore, camping, picnicking, and horseback riding. The woodlands are interlaced by 8 miles of forest roads, and numerous trails lead to points of scenic interest. Visit Friday, Saturday or Sunday and attend a park program on wildlife, trees of the forest or guided hike. There is a daily parking fee of \$5.00 per vehicle.

http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/central/ervf.htm http://www.mass.gov/dcr/events/erv-july.pdf

West:

Tolland State Forest 410 Tolland Road, East Otis 413-269-6002 phone

Located in the rolling southern Berkshire Hills, the centerpiece of this state forest is the 1,065-acre Otis Reservoir. The lake provides a wide variety of recreational activities, including a public boat launch ramp. A unique and popular destination during the summer is the <u>campground</u>, located on a scenic and wooded peninsula. Also available is a day-use area with sandy beach and several multi-use trails. Check out park programs at the Nature Center!

Ongoing Tales and Trails, Wednesdays, 4pm. Meet at Nature Center.

For all ages. Wear sturdy footwear. A variety of short hikes. Features local cultural or natural history: Gulf Bridge Cemetery tombstone walk, Gilmore Trail, stagecoach road, local ecology, tree identification. Meets at Nature Center. One hour duration.

Ongoing Critters of the forest Fun! Fridays, 4pm. Meet at Nature Center.

For all ages. Discover the wildlife of Tolland State Forest and other interesting animals. Explore nature using Discovery Kits, activities, games and crafts and maybe even a few live furry friends make a special appearance!

Neat GPP Options from Our Partners!

Farm Fresh and Healthy too! Check them out!

2012 GPP Partners the **Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources** and the **Massachusetts Department of Public Health** invite GPP teams to visit a Massachusetts Farmers Market and then cook-up a seasonal, nutritious, delicious treat!

Visit the "Partners" page http://209.80.128.250/DCR/GPP/Learn/Partners.aspx?mid=114&pcid=103&pid=102 to find out details, a list of Farmers markets and seasonal recipes! Don't forget to take a team photo –and share it online to get credit toward your 6 park pursuits!

Special Invitation!! Become An Outdoor Family – Learn to Camp!

Calling All Outdoor Families!

FAMILY CAMPING REGISTRATION-spots still available. Act Fast! Deadline July 27th.

Families who would like to try out camping this summer are encouraged to sign up for the Becoming an Outdoors Family Camping Weekend to be held on August 4-5, 2012 at the Otter River State Forest in Templeton. This is a partnership program between the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Conservation and Recreation and North Face. No prior outdoor experience is necessary; this weekend is especially designed for families new to camping. The focus will be on learning basic camping and recreation skills such as outdoor cooking, fishing, archery, and hiking to help you and your family to enjoy the outdoors. Some camping equipment is provided by REI, Inc. Registration deadline is July 27 and some scholarship assistance is available. Registration materials at:

www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/education/bow/bow_calendar.htm or call (508)389-6329.

Reminders!

A few helpful notes and FAQs for your 2012 GPP series:

1.) What really counts for a "park pursuit"?

All park visits, park programs attended and participation in the "partner" opportunities as outlined on GPP Partner page count toward a Team's 6 personal "park pursuits". Looking for ideas visit the GPP Family Homepage and get ideas from other GPP Teams, read the GPP Picks of the Week (above) for inspiration or visit the DCR website for program, park and activity links. Go for a swim, take a trail walk, have a picnic, go fishing, join a program, borrow a "Discovery" pack. This is a chance for your GPP Team and Squirrel to explore your state parks, have fun and learn or see something new. Remember to capture a photo and share it online!

2.) Do I have to check the "permissions" box for photos and stories?

Please do. While DCR does collect "Participant Release Forms" it is still helpful to have these checked. Please take a moment to click the box as you are submitting photos and stories.

3.) Park and Program Information.

The DCR is committed to the stewardship of the state park system and providing a quality visitor experience. We encourage all GPP Teams to call the park phone prior to their visit to make sure the park is open and/or the program is running. This is especially important is the summer season as favorable weather may cause parks to meet visitor capacity early in the day and thereby prohibit immediate or further access. Unfavorable weather or a Weather Advisory may require temporary closures or program cancellations to ensure the public's safety. Additionally, we suggest you review the program details before attending —and confirm any questions such as age/skill appropriateness, time and meeting location with the program contact person listed whenever possible.

4.) EEE. Eastern Equine Encephalitis and Tick/Tick Related Illness

Be smart and safe! The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) provides a number of "Fact Sheets" and Public Advisories to support your knowledge and awareness of public health related issues. Please take a moment to visit the DPH website and "Fact Sheet" listings page to access information and best practices regarding time and activity in the outdoors. Of specific interest is information on EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) carried by mosquitoes and Ticks/Tick related illness.

DPH homepage http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph

DPH Fact Sheets http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/prog-a-j/bcdc/factsheets.html

5.) Things to Know Before You Go!

When visiting a park, program or on the trail, a variety of tools and accessories can help to keep you safe, warm and comfortable:

- Wear sturdy footwear
- Dress for the weather. Dress in layers for maximum comfort
- Bring a hat. Consider sunscreen and bug repellant.
- Bring water and a snack
- Hike with a companion. Or stay with the group. Carry a cell phone if available.
- Bring a map. Know your limits
- Carry out what you carry in.

- Don't feed wildlife.
- Stay on marked trails and in permitted areas.

Keep it Simple! Make it Fun! Ideas!

Finding Shapes in Nature! Adding to your nature journal.

Leaf Rubbings!

MATERIALS:

- Crayons
- Paper (white or light colored recommended)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Enjoy a walk in the outdoors. Stop and collect a leaf or needles that have already fallen from the ground. Leaves of all shapes and sizes appear in nature.
- On a piece of plain white paper, position leaves vein side up in a pattern you like. Place another sheet of plain white paper over the top of the leaves.
- Select the crayons that you would like to use to create your rubbing and peel off the paper wrappers. Turn a crayon on its side and gently rub over the top sheet of paper.
- Prefer not to peel the crayon paper... gently use the tip of the crayon and color over the entire leaf carefully. (Effect will vary).
- Leaf images will appear on the paper!

TIPS:

- Make a leaf id by adding the name of the leaf to your rubbing
- Make a colorful collage by stopping at various points in the walk to add different leaves to your picture.
- Try different colors to mimic nature or for a really colorful creation.

REMEMBER!

Please use only natural materials which have already fallen to the forest floor. Please return the leaves to the spot where you found them when you are finished making your rubbing. Keep our forests healthy and do not take or transport materials in or out of nature. Thank you!

Shape of Things!

Exploring nature can be fun! It is also a fun way to learn together! You'll be amazed at how much there is to see when we take the time to look. Shapes, Patterns, Letters and Numbers! Visit Project Learning Tree (PLT) family learning pages and download tools to enhance your nature exploration. There are many activities you and your child(ren) can do together. http://www.plt.org/early-childhood-activity-1-the-shape-of-things You can always record your nature discoveries in your journal.

Activities Courtesy of DCR and Project Learning Tree